

CLATSOP COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

# CUM TUX



Vol. 13, No. 3 – Summer, 1993



*S.S.S. Flying Cloud on February 28, 1935 in the Astoria Elks*

CCHS #9428-150  
R. A. Horton Collection

## Mastering the Columbia River

The Sea Scout troop of Astoria is celebrating its sixtieth anniversary this year. In May of 1933, the Charter was granted to the S.S.S. [Sea Scout Ship] Flying Cloud, a unit that arose out of Troop 211 of the Boy Scouts of America.

Three members of Pacific Power and Light guided its development in the early years: R.A. Horton, Joe Henningsen and R.G. Dalgleish. Lester, the son of R.A. Horton, was the first Sea Scout in Astoria to attain the rank of "Able Sea Scout," and Don Goodall received the first "Quartermaster" award.

Ed Feary, also a former Sea Scout, and John Lum, seen above, identified the boys in the photograph, as follows:

**FRONT ROW, left to right:**

Les Horton, Lloyd Hagnas, Ed Nickoletti, Ralph Johnson,  
James Anderson, Don Riswick, Robert Foster, John Lum.

**BACK ROW, left to right:**

Delwin Barney, Cliff Johns, Harold Nelson, Alfred Graichen,  
unknown, Don Goodall, unknown, James Chester, Myron  
Miller.

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Inc.**

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Flavel House  
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# CUMTUX

**CLATSOP COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
QUARTERLY Vol. 13, No. 3 – Summer, 1993**

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**COVER:**

*An unidentified three-masted sailing vessel. CCHS photo #4516-34*

Astorian Printing Co.

*CUMTUX: Chinook jargon:  
"To know . . . acknowledge . . . to inform."*

NOTE.—Any person who forges or fraudulently alters any Certificate or Report, or who makes use of any Certificate, or Report, which is forged or altered or does not belong to him, shall for each such offence be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and may be fined or imprisoned.

N.B.—Should this Certificate come into the possession of any person to whom it does not belong, it should be handed to the Superintendent of the nearest Mercantile Marine Office, or be transmitted to the Registrar-General of Seamen, Custom House, London, E.C.

# CERTIFICATE OF DISCHARGE

No. 74286 Dis. 1.  
St 1378

FOR SEAVEN DISCHARGED BEFORE THE SUPERINTENDENT OF A MERCANTILE MARINE OFFICE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM, A BRITISH CONSUL, OR A SHIPPING OFFICER IN BRITISH POSSESSION ABROAD.



Name of Ship.	Official Number.	Port of Registry.	Reg. Tonnage.
Musselcraig	106792	Port	1877
House Power of Engines (if any).	Description of Voyage or Employment.		
	Foreign Trade		

Name of Seaman.	Age.	Place of Birth.	No. of R.N.R.	Date of Birth.	Place of Discharge.
W. R. Osborne	20	Oxfordshire			SYDNEY.
Date of Engagement.	Place of Engagement.	Date of Discharge.			
5.3.1903	Astoria	7.12.1903			

I certify that the above particulars are correct and that the abovenamed Seaman was discharged accordingly,\* and that the character described hereon is a true copy of the Report concerning the said Seaman.

DATED this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_

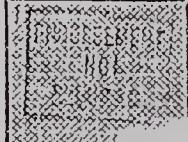
Authenticated by \_\_\_\_\_

Charles Johnson, Master.

John L. S. [unclear] Shipping Master.

\* If the Seaman does not require a Certificate of his character, obliterate the following words in line two, and score through the squares.

CHARACTER  
FOR  
CONDUCT.



CHARACTER  
FOR  
ABILITY.



Signature of Seaman } W. R. Osborne

W.J.R. Osborne's certificate of discharge. The dates on this form do not agree with the dates given in these memoirs. Osborne was shanghaied on March 3, 1903 and freed on December 9, after more than nine months of involuntary duty aboard the Musselcraig.

# Shanghaied at Astoria

by W. J. R. Osborne

I paid many visits to the coast from the village and gazed at the broad waters of the Pacific Ocean from here [Seaside] for the first time, not without a wish that I might have the pleasure of sailing its deep waters, all unthinking how soon that wish was to be fulfilled. Leaving Seaside on March 3rd, 1903, I proceeded by rail to Astoria, one of the oldest seaports on the coast of the United States. Here you will discover a somewhat dilapidated and dirty-looking town built on the south bank of the mouth of the Columbia River. Many ships were laying at anchor here, and while gazing listlessly at the river and surrounding country, accompanied by a young man by the name of Gardiner, we were suddenly accosted by a dapper little man in flashy clothes, and bedecked with jewelry. He at once saw that we were strangers for Astoria is but a small place. He also saw "money" in us, but unfortunately for himself, he saw no further. During the course of conversation, this erstwhile friend touched on the joy of a sailor's life, and painted word pictures of the wonderful lands far away across the broad waters of the Pacific. He presently pointed to a fine Barque laying at anchor some half mile from where we were standing, and surprised us by telling us that he was the owner of the vessel, and would be pleased to take us aboard and show us what a "windjammer" was really like. This very kind (?) offer we both eagerly accepted, and being led along the wall of the jetty for a few yards, we soon arrived at some steps leading down to

the water's edge, where lay a smart little motor launch, his also. Into this launch we jumped, more than delighted at having found such a decent chap, who was willing to put himself out solely for our amusement.

## Visit to the *Musselcraig*

It was only a matter of a few minutes before we pulled up alongside of the Barque *Musselcraig* and scrambling aboard were soon lost in amazement at the maze of ropes, pulleys and gear with which all such craft abound. Our guide, assuring us that we had the run of the whole ship and ample time to see everything, we strolled along the deck, in blissful ignorance of the fact that we had both been shanghaied. This, however, proved to be the case. Soon after arrival on board, we noticed a liveliness "forward," and attracted by the singing of the crew, mounted to the fo'c'sle head where the whole of the ship's company were busy heaving round the windlass. Little did we dream that every turn was drawing the anchor up, and no one volunteered any information, or questioned us at all. It was quite a long job weighing anchor by the windlass, but at length it appeared and was presently hauled inboard and secured. Even this did not raise any suspicions in the mind of Gardiner or myself, but shortly after, when a great hawser was passed over the bow and taken on board of a snorting tug, we thought it was time we left the ship, so stepping on to

the maindeck, we looked in vain for the "owner," who was nowhere to be found. It was now about 4 o'clock p.m., and someone informed us that he would not be returning until 6 o'clock. This information was quite satisfactory to us both, and we resigned ourselves to a couple of hours wait, but before many minutes had passed we suddenly became aware of the fact that the ship was making way. Enquiry elicited the surprising news that the ship was at that moment bound for San Francisco, and as it would be out of the question to hold her back, we had better make up our minds to settle down until such time as we reached that city. Needless to say, we were at once filled with grave misgivings, one fact alone cheering me, and that was that this was an English vessel; therefore, I felt convinced that we should meet with fair treatment. Our charge for the time being, a powerful little tug, took us safely across the bar, and directly after, the rigging of the ship was alive with men, unfurling the sails and generally preparing the ship for sea. Of course, we took no part in these operations, and presently, when everything necessary had been done, the crew was ordered to "fall in aft." This order obeyed, we were questioned as to why we too had not "fallen in." Telling our interrogator that we were only visitors, he burst into a hearty laugh, after which he told us that we had better disillusion ourselves, and make up our minds that we constituted "the balance of the ship's company," for which she had been held up in Astoria. Of course, we informed him that we should leave the ship as soon as she reached San Francisco, which only made him laugh the more, he fully appreciating our position, and further informing us that it would be many a day before the ship reached there, for the next time she dropped anchor, it was expected it would find a hold on the bottom of Algoa Bay. The geographical position

of that spot was quite unknown to us. The mate, for he it was who had been talking to us, briefly informed us that it was on the East Coast of South Africa, in short, we were bound for Port Elizabeth with a cargo of wheat and flour. My friend Gardiner was very much upset at learning this news. As for myself, it seemed to fit in so nicely with my wishes that I at once settled down, and soon found myself a member of the Port Watch.

### Fellow crew members

There were not many folk aboard the *Musselcraig*, thirty-two all told, and I found my fellow shipmates of the Port Watch to be quite a cosmopolitan party, considering they were only eight in number, including myself. The watch was composed of one German, one Russian Finn, one Hollander, three Frenchman, and another Englishman beside myself. However, all could speak English excepting two of the Frenchman, who were only just entered into the British Merchant Service. The forecastle was a small, stuffy space, divided by a wooden partition into two compartments of equal size, the size of each one not exceeding 14 by 8 feet. This is the sailor's sole place, wherein he sleeps and eats, containing also a fresh water tank, which is replenished daily, with the allowance meted out to each watch. We soon found ourselves out at sea, and with a fresh fair wind, the shores of Oregon quickly receded into the gloom of the oncoming night, and we awoke the next morning with no land in sight whatever. It was bitterly cold here, too, so different from the mild air we had so recently left. At 8 a.m. the Port Watch turned to, and I with them.

### Storm at sea

It is difficult now when I look back, to remember just what I did

during those first days, but well do I recollect that when we had been at sea for only three days, a very violent storm arose and we were rolled and tossed about unmercifully, much to our discomfort. This storm developed into a total gale, and on the second day, the ship was "hove to," and we were performing our duties with from two to three feet of water continually washing the deck. It alarmed me very much to see the force with which the waves broke over the ship's side, but fortunately, further than the discomfort of being continually wet through and very much frightened, I suffered no ill, but poor Gardiner suffered much from the effects of violent sea-sickness. The storm did not abate until the end of the third day, when a wonderful calm set in, and lasted for many weeks. In fact we came into the North-East trade winds. These winds blow continually and extend from 20 degrees north of the equator to 20 degrees south of it, but after having crossed the line, they are charted as "South-East Trades."

### Ceremony for Father Neptune

Of course, when nearing the Equator, Father Neptune is remembered and all the uninitiated are introduced to him, but it is rather a crude ceremony on board of a ship of this description. The old Englishman who was in my watch personated Father Neptune, and as Gardiner and myself were the only two aboard who had not met this gentleman, we were in due time called before him. Ushered unceremoniously into his presence, we beheld a white, whiskered man, sitting with an immense tin razor in his hand and beside him a large brush. After a few questions and the assurance of Father Neptune that he is quite sure he has never met us before, he orders his attendants to lather the victims. This is at once carried out, much to the discomfort of the

unfortunate individual who passes through it, care being taken to get plenty of lather in the eyes and ears. When this has been done to the satisfaction of the "old man," he orders you to be brought forward to be shaved by him. This is not so bad, but after scraping off some of the soap, and with your eyes still smarting with the effects of the lather in them, you are led to a large cask, and there turned up and immersed therein three times, each one being of sufficient duration to assure the "old man" that his new acquaintance has swallowed a fair amount of the "briny" with which the tub is filled. This concludes the introduction to Father Neptune, and no one is more pleased than he who has so recently been introduced.

### Duties on board ship

There is not much variety in the seafaring man's life; existence becomes very monotonous, same thing day in and day out, watch below, alternating every four hours, with the exception of the "dog watches," when the watches change over daily. Sport consists chiefly of fishing and at times this is quite exciting. Whenever a shark is seen to be following the ship, all hands are required to catch it. Although this is not so on every ship, our skipper was always ready for catching one of these "tigers of the sea." We were fortunate in catching three of them. It is not altogether free from danger either. There are always hooks and gear held in readiness and as soon as Mr. Shark shows himself, the bait (usually a large piece of salt beef or pork) is put onto the great shark hook, and dropped over the stern, being at once greedily swallowed by the greedy brute, meat and hook altogether. Being securely hooked, he is pulled up until his head is level with the rail of the poop, when a running noose is passed over his tail.

Thus the fish is securely held, head and tail. He is next hauled violently inboard and as soon as this is accomplished, he flounders about taking great jumps and biting at anything which comes in his way. Should this happen to be the leg of a man, it would quickly come off, therefore, it is advisable to give him a wide berth until he is properly secured. This is accomplished by hauling along to the two after capstans, where turns are quickly taken with the loose ends of both ropes and the capstans turned until the ropes are taut, with the shark suspended midway between the two. He is at once slit from throat to tail and in that manner killed. The skin is sometimes cut off and distributed among the crew, who find it useful for sharpening their sheath knives upon and in the case of the three which we caught, steaks were cut from the back, afterwards providing a tasty repast. There is no striking difference in the flavor of this fish and any other, and I should never refuse a good steak cut from such a fish. The largest that we caught was eight feet, four inches in length and its weight would be about 180 pounds. Another very interesting form of fishing is catching "Bonita." These are a fine fish, turning the scale at from 14 to 40 pounds each. Their presence is usually indicated by the flying fish, their chief prey. The method of catching them is very interesting. The fisherman crawls out on the bowsprit and standing on the footrope, securely ties a large kitbag beneath his feet. This done, he takes his line, tied around the hook of which is a piece of white rag, this to resemble the flying fish. Care is taken to keep the rag near to the surface of the water, and every few minutes, to haul it quite clear of the surface. Should the ship be sailing at a fair speed, the unsuspecting Bonita, thinking he sees a real flying fish, shoots out of the water, and providing his aim is accurate, he manages to capture the rag (and the hook). They cause a lot of fun, for a 30

or 40 pound fish requires a lot of patience and care to drop him safely into the bag which has been prepared for him under the footrope. Not very many of these are caught as a rule, for they seldom stay very long. The flesh of this fish is not always good to eat, therefore, it is always tested before being cooked. A silver coin is pushed into the flesh soon after it is caught and allowed to remain there some three or four hours when it is taken out. If the silver is bright, it is good flesh, while if the fish be poisonous, it will discolor the coin.

### Pitcairn Island

Soon after leaving the equator, our captain tells us he intends to make Pitcairn Island and there trade with the natives. This island is the most southerly of the South Sea groups, and is quite a small one, being only one and one half miles long, and about half a mile wide. The natives here are English-speaking people, and the population is about 150. It is a very fertile place; the folks raise a lot of fruit. They have no money trouble here, as it is an unknown quantity; all trade is done by bartering. We give them glass bottles, cotton clothing, flour or anything made up, and in exchange, they give us eggs and fruit, such as grapes, bananas, etc. We anchored about half a mile off the island, and were soon surrounded by a fair number of boats. A fair exchange took place, and after an hour's stay, we leave again. After leaving Pitcairn, we enter on the worst part of the voyage, that is, "rounding the Cape." It is customary in the Merchant Service, when making this passage to allow the hands to "stand by" from 40 degrees south to 40 degrees south again, that is to say, if you are approaching Cape Horn from the eastern side of South America, you do nothing with the exception of actually sailing the vessel until you have rounded the Horn, and

arrived at the parallel of 40 degrees on the western side, and vice versa. The whole of the time, rough seas are encountered while it is very necessary to keep a sharp lookout for icebergs, especially at spring time. During this voyage, we saw and sailed fairly closely to several, some being immense, more nearly resembling an island than an iceberg. After a matter of about a month, we arrived safely at the 40th parallel of latitude east of the mainland and once more turn to with the usual routine of ship work, which consists chiefly of painting and when finished, scraping it all off again. This painting becomes very monotonous, but without this to do, it would prove a difficult matter to keep the hands employed.

### On to Algoa Bay

Meeting with fairly good weather, we draw at length towards the Cape of Good Hope, but here we meet with a most violent "Sou'easter," which forced us to heave to once more. During the height of this gale, which lasted for two whole weeks, we were driven some six hundred miles out of our true course, also suffering the total loss of our lifeboats. Also, the chicken and pigeon coops were washed overboard. In fact, the ship was more or less a wreck on the upper deck. One or two of the hands received minor injuries at different times, but we, at length, weathered it and made our course towards Port Elizabeth once more, arriving there safely on July 26th, 1903, having been at sea continuously for 117 days. We dropped anchor in the wild waters of Algoa Bay opposite to the town, and about one and one half miles from the shore. It was a great disappointment to find the ship so far from the shore and greater still when we were informed that she would remain in that billet during her stay in the bay, which it was estimated would last for about three months. Added to this, no leave was

allowed, which made a bad job worse.

### The stevedore crew

We were not long here before we were prepared to discharge our cargo, which was made up of 3,000 tons of wheat and 300 tons of flour. This is carried out with the assistance of large lighters, which are made fast alongside and filled by hand power, one bag of wheat only being hauled up at a time, each bag containing 280 pounds, hence the length of time involved. We were not required to do the discharging, this being in the hands of a stevedore company from ashore, who send a large crowd of Kaffirs and Zulus to do the work. It is very interesting to watch these men working. They make absolute play of it, singing and laughing from morning to night. There are very few amongst them who can speak English, but we had two or three who could, one of them becoming a great favorite with the crew, Sambo, we used to call him and many were the conversations I had with him, until one day, about the end of August, he told me he would not be coming to the ship any more, as he was leaving on the morrow for East London, and was getting married. He volunteered the information that he already had three wives, but had arranged with the father of another dusky maiden to take her off his hands, paying for the privilege in kind, the purchase price of this fortunate (?) damsel being three cows. We missed Sam very much, however, but the work went merrily on as usual, and at the end of ten weeks, we had only one bag of wheat left on board. This bag is the cause of very special attention, placed into the sling at the bottom of the ship; it is hauled up with a member of the crew sitting astride of it, with a bottle of whisky in his hand, full and sealed. No hurry is made to hoist this precious cargo. Many "chanties" are sung, and it takes a matter of quite an hour before

the bag, bottle, and man reach the mast head, when the fortunate holder of the bottle knocks off the neck, and serenely drinks the health of the captain and crew, also wished luck to the rest of the ships in the harbour, after which he is lowered at a rapid rate, and on regaining the deck, hands the bottle around amongst the remainder of the crew. Our next job is to ballast the ship, which is not such a big job. Sand is brought alongside and quickly thrown inboard.

### Escape from the ship

During my stay here, I managed to get into touch with the Shipping Master, but could not get away to see him, neither did he come aboard. I wrote telling him the way I came aboard the ship, but to no avail. I wrote also to my folks at home, who I knew would be quite concerned as to what had become of me by this time. One Sunday morning, I made an attempt to escape from the ship. Getting into one of the lighters which had been loaded overnight and was to be taken away that morning, I hid myself among the sacks of wheat, and was eventually taken alongside the jetty. Watching a favorable opportunity, I at length jumped out on to the jetty and was making my way down to the beach, quite pleased to be free from the ship, but entirely destitute, with the exception of two American \$5.00 gold pieces, when to my surprise and sorrow, I ran into our captain and the three apprentices, just returning from church. There was no escape, and I was taken back on board, and arriving there was put into the sail locker, a perfectly dark room, and confined there for about three hours. Presently I was ordered into the Skipper's cabin, and then cross-examined by him as to my intentions. I told him I was quite sick of being with him, and wished to leave the ship. Of course, this was not to be thought of and I must be punished. He ordered me

to be put on bread and water for three days and confined in the sail locker, at the same time warning me that any further attempt to escape would meet with serious punishment and very likely imprisonment at the next port. I got over this all right, but made no other effort to get away, and shortly after, the ship once more got under way, this time bound for Sydney, New South Wales. I will pass over this trip, suffice it to say that we were 73 days before completing it, arriving at Sydney on December 9th. This was for me a memorable day. We had not long been in harbour before the doctor arrived to look at the crew, and see if we were fit to enter. Finding no disease, we were at once passed out of quarantine, and a smart little brass bound steamer came alongside. Several men were very quickly aboard and as soon as they reached the deck, one of them called out in a clear voice, "Osborne! W.R.J. Osborne!" This somewhat alarmed me, as may be imagined. However, I announced myself at once and was informed that I was required ashore together with Captain Robinson. Being put into the boat, which was a Police Patrol boat, and the Captain and First Mate accompanying us, we steamed straight for Circular Quay. Landing here, we were taken direct to the Shipping Office. Well do I remember Captain Robinson casting glances at me, and when he would catch my eye, there was a vicious look about him that alarmed me. However, I felt quite safe while in the care of the police and readily guessed what was afoot. In short, my letter home had ample time to arrive and time also to acquaint the authorities here of my expected arrival. This is what had happened, and Robinson, no doubt, felt somewhat uneasy as to the result of the coming enquiry. I was ushered into the presence of the Shipping Master, and to cut a long yarn short, it was only a matter of a couple of hours before Captain Robinson had

been dispatched to the *Musselcraig* and had returned to this office with 33 £, which money I was paid, and released [from] the ship, together with Gardiner, who received a similar amount of money. ♦

*The adventures of W.J.R. Osborne was not yet over. He spent some time in Australia then took a tramp steamer, via South America, to Rotterdam and eventually arrived home in England.*

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These memoirs were sent to Bruce Berney of the Astoria Public Library by G.W. Osborne, son of the author, who wrote to Berney that his father had often remarked that the dapper man adorned with jewelry who tricked him and his acquaintance into visiting the

*Musselcraig*, was the notorious shanghaier, Paddy Lynch. Joseph Patrick (Paddy) Lynch was sentenced to prison for his part in another shanghaiing case in April of 1903 by Judge McBride of Astoria. He was released from prison by Oregon Governor George Earle Chamberlain in July of 1906 who justified his action by claiming that there was grave doubt that Lynch was guilty of the crime and that even if he were guilty, he had already been punished enough. Paddy Lynch had many good friends in Astoria, one being Dr. H.L. Henderson who stated that although Lynch had admitted his guilt in the case, he had been too weak from illness at the time and could not have possibly have been guilty. By the time he was released from jail, the age of shanghaiing was almost at an end and Paddy Lynch found other illegal activities to pursue.

## Treasures of the Deep

**S**ome unusual objects line the floor of the Columbia River and its tributaries. Mark Laukkonen, who grew up in Brownsmead and is now a resident of Puget Island, has discovered many of them in his work as a diver clearing the river drifts of snags. Among the treasures he has found are two ancient wooden set-net anchors whose willow shanks were filled with rock for weight, a brass lantern that was used as a running light on an old steam towboat, and a barrel of spoons engraved "U.S. Navy." Some of the

larger items include a forty-six foot steel propeller from a towboat and a seven thousand pound anchor lost from a dredge. The smallest item Mark recovered was a diamond wedding ring worth \$1200 that had been lost in a slough. He did not expect to find it, but when he explored the murky water, the sparkle gave the ring away. Another time when Mark was asked to look for a car that rolled off the Westport ferry slip, he thought it would be an easy job, but he was never able to find it or to figure out what happened to it. ♦

# Scenes of the dredge *Colonel P.S. Michie*

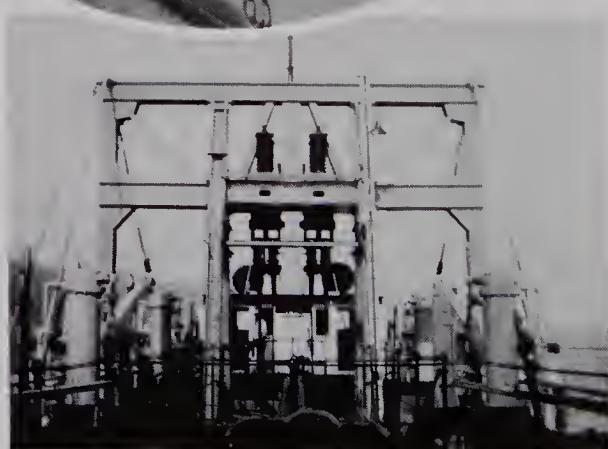
Photos courtesy of Charles E Haddix



The *Michie* in 1941 docked at Pier 3 in Astoria, Oregon.



Charles E Haddix  
on board the  
*Michie* in 1941.



Aboard the *Michie*,  
looking aft at the  
dredging equipment.

# An Adventure in Dredging

by Charles E Haddix

**R**eal life adventures seldom start as planned. The one I experienced while working on the United States Army Engineer's seagoing hopper dredge *Colonel P. S. Michie* was a good example. It started on a bright sunny Saturday, June 14th, 1941, at the face of the Astoria Port Docks Pier 2 and ended at the same location ten months later on April 17, 1942.

The *Michie* was a familiar sight to most Astorians. She worked on the river from Longview to the bar during the first half of this century. Because forty years have passed since her departure, a short introduction is in order.

On August 16, 1913, a strange looking vessel slid down the ways of the Seattle Construction and Drydock Company in Seattle, Washington. Following her preliminary speed and working test trials on November 13, 1913, she was delivered to the Multnomah Division of the Corps of Engineers, Portland, Oregon.

Many strange vessels have traversed the Columbia River and other waters of the West Coast. The *Michie* was one of them: a sea-going center drag hopper dredge, designed to keep the rivers and harbors deep enough for ocean-going vessels. You can probably see her successors today if you look towards the mouth of the Columbia River. Today's sea-going dredges carry a side drag on each side of the ship as opposed to the *Michie's* obsolete center drag.

From a distance she looked like

any other vessel. But close up, it was a different story. Her bridge, directly aft of the bow was followed by a high stack and a long center walkway towards the stern. Aft of the walkway on the starboard side was the dredgemaster's control room. Continuing aft were the engine room, messroom and officers' quarters on the stern. Immediately above was the "doghouse" for extra dredgehands. The crew's quarters were below deck in the extreme forward part of the ship. Below the bridge were the quartermaster cabins and purser's office.

A large open space in the center of the ship contained the center drag that vacuumed up the dredged material from the river bottom. Each side contained three large, deep tanks with levers to control the inward flow of the water and material coming from the drag. Also, levers were nearby for opening and closing the doors at the bottom of the tanks.

The dredgemaster controlled the depth of the drag while the dredgehands checked the flow of the material. The dredgehand's job was to maintain the ship on a level keel as the dredged liquid flowed through the large pipes to the tanks. Back and forth, over the river bottom, the *Michie* would ply her way until the tanks were level full. Then off she would go to the dumping ground.

Arriving at the dumping site, a dredgehand would be in the "chains" (a small platform right below the starboard bridge). There he would begin throwing a leadline and calling

out the depth for the mate on watch above.

At the mate's signal, the other dredgehands would pull the levers to open the tank doors on the ship's bottom to discharge the entire cargo in a matter of minutes.

To anyone on shore, this presented a strange sight: a vessel slowly going along, gradually rising out of the river for a considerable height. We used to tell those who asked that the *Michie* could ride over hills on the river bottom without any damage to the hull.

### Origin of the name

The *Michie* was named for Colonel Peter S. Michie, a native of Scotland, who was appointed from Ohio to attend West Point and graduated second in his class of twenty-five members in 1863. He had a colorful career during the Civil War. He was made Brevet Captain and later, on October 23, 1864, rose to the rank of Major for gallant and meritorious service during the 1864 campaign against the southern forces at Richmond, Virginia. He was then promoted to the rank of Brevet Brigadier General in the United States Volunteers. In 1871, he was appointed Professor of Natural and Experimental Philosophy at West Point. I could find no record of his death, nor the reason the Corps named the dredge for him.

Weather conditions were not always favorable for dredging but the *Michie* worked whenever bar or river conditions permitted.

On May 29, 1914, while lying at anchor in the Coos Bay, Oregon, harbor, she was rammed by the steamer A.M. Simpson, shearing her on its passage down the channel. Temporary repairs were made at nearby Marshfield (now called Coos Bay), so she could go to Portland for permanent repairs. She arrived in Portland July 7, 1914.

By one of those strange coincidences of the sea, her successor was rammed and sunk near the entrance

to the Coos Bay channel forty years later.

Coos Bay was again the site of another *Michie* adventure when, in 1924 she rescued passengers from the burning coastal passenger ship *Congress* off the harbor entrance. The crew of the *Congress*, as an expression of gratitude presented the *Michie* crew with a very fine victrola.

To relieve the boredom of her dredging life some time in 1924 or 1928 she ran up on the south jetty of the Columbia River. Much to her embarrassment, she had to be towed up the river by the bar tug *Oneonta*.

When I joined her in 1941, she was dredging near the mouth of the Columbia River and later up past Tongue Point and Castle Rock. Finishing that assignment, she returned to Coos Bay to work on the harbor entrance. The trip down the coast was uneventful. The arrival off the mouth of Coos Bay came at a time of thick fog. Those who knew about her past history understood why a very sharp watch had to be maintained and the foghorns sounded at regular intervals.

The routine of the ship was an unbroken one, dredging around the clock from midnight Sunday until noon Saturday. Then she would head for port for fuel and supplies. Most of the officers and crew were Portland residents and would leave for home each weekend.

Then news one week came that bids were being taken for an annual overhaul and we all awaited the lowest bid decision. It was finally awarded to the Washington Drydock and Marine Railway on Bainbridge Island near Seattle.

Her overhaul completed in mid-year 1941, she proceeded down the coast to San Diego to deepen the ship channel off North Island for larger naval vessels. The familiar sights of submarines, destroyers and aircraft

carriers came again to the crew who had been aboard when the *Michie* had dredged parts of San Francisco Bay near Mare Island.

### Duty at Kaneohe

On November 1st, 1941, orders came to proceed to Honolulu for work in deepening the channel from the ocean to Kaneohe Naval Air Base. This would allow large tankers to supply the aviation fuel for the PBY's and other aircraft based there. This was old stuff for the *Michie*. She had been to the Islands before and had made at least three trips to Alaska.

In November, life on the *Michie* was a pleasant one. Working on the Kaneohe channel was interesting. First, underwater explosive charges were placed to break up the coral that was then dredged up by the *Michie* and taken out to sea to be dumped. With the vacuum cleaner type of dredge arm, all sorts of strange things would come up from the bottom through the huge pump. One time a whole mess of crabs would appear in the tanks, then fish and other objects that were on the bottom.

Every Saturday noon, we would leave Kaneohe with its lines of PBY's lying at anchor, make our way round Diamond Head, then go on to Fort Armstrong in Honolulu Harbor for fuel and supplies. At midnight Sunday after a pleasant time ashore sightseeing and going to the movies, the crew boarded again for the trip back to Kaneohe. Upon arrival we would immediately proceed with the dredging assignment.

Saturday, December 6, 1941, was a Saturday like any other. I had spent the day on Waikiki Beach and part of the evening in downtown Honolulu. I had the 8 o'clock p.m. to 4 a.m. deck watch. Two Coast Guard patrol boats operating without running lights were on guard near by.

### Pearl Harbor bombed

A few minutes before eight on Sunday morning, one of the men on deck came in the "doghouse" and yelled, "They are bombing Pearl Harbor!" I looked outside and saw a sky filled with anti-aircraft fire. I could hear the loud "crump" of exploding bombs and see the clouds of smoke coming up from Pearl Harbor in the distance. Later we were to learn much of it was from the U.S.S. *Arizona*. By that time, the *Michie* crew was too busy to worry about other events. Lying at the Aloha Tower dock way ahead of us was the Dutch freighter *Bloemfontein*. This was old stuff to them. They had manned 20 millimeter anti-aircraft guns at various parts of the ship. Overhead a Japanese Zero came down close enough for us to see the pilot's head under his canopy. Shells from the *Bloemfontein* drove him away from our vicinity. He did manage to drop a bomb that injured two soldiers at the fort nearby. We watched an army ambulance take them away.

Over Pearl Harbor, the Japanese planes kept circling and dropping bombs with one of the circles directly over our heads. Six planes dropped from the circle over us and came so low we could see the red dots on their wings. The silver color of their paint made them hard to see against the bright sunlight. As they dove down, the *Bloemfontein*'s guns fired directly at them. When they pulled out of their dive, we could hear the whine of the bombs coming down. One landed on a Ford V-8 and automobile parts flew through the air. Another bomb lit about 200 yards away at the fort where fire engines raced to control the damage.

Immediately following the attack, the Army Engineers Corps which controlled us, sent over officers to line us up for emergency help. They ordered *Michie* crew members, including myself, over to Punahou school to

prepare a site for internees. The army intelligence had been prepared for this. In no time the place was filled with all nationalities that were suspect.

The first night, there was a complete blackout with guards, including members of the American Legion, at every intersection. The next day, we were sent to the Washington Intermediate School playground to dig trenches for air raid shelters. We worked until dark and then went to a darkened room with blue lights for a dinner of beans, bread and water. On the way back to the ship, our truck was stopped at every intersection by nervous soldiers, and that did little to help our equanimity.

Our captain, Peter J. Hansen of Portland, Oregon, was a determined man. Bombs or no bombs, the *Michie* had a dredging job to complete in Kaneohe and off we went. No sooner were we out of the harbor than a destroyer raced up past us and started dropping depth charges. Five minutes later, an excited Honolulu radio announcer reported that a submarine had been destroyed near us. Following the attack, the destroyer came alongside us. The Captain yelled at us with a bullhorn because nobody could read his signal lights. We were ordered to return to Fort Armstrong until it was safe to return to work. Grudgingly, Captain Hansen did as ordered.

Two days later, following our arrival at the dredging site, we found we could only work during daylight hours due to the blackout. Guards were posted on deck with Springfield rifles for any emergency. At nearby Kaneohe Air Base, not a single PBY was afloat. One of the huge fuel storage tanks had been blown apart and there was other serious damage. Our routine scheduling that took us to Fort Armstrong for the weekend had saved our lives.

### Return home

March, 1942 found the *Michie*

completing her assignment and returning to her home base in the Multnomah District in Oregon. The only unusual event on the return passage was noted in the Chief Mate's report. The Captain said someone had shifted the Farallon Islands before we arrived in San Francisco.

Shortly after arriving in Astoria, I decided to leave one of the homes I enjoyed most. The war was on now, and as a merchant seaman, I had to leave for Portland to join the Liberty ship *Walt Whitman* for a voyage to Central America and then to the East Coast for North Atlantic convoy duty.

In 1946, Captain Peter J. Hansen turned the ship over to Captain Ernie Williams, her captain until 1950, when she left the Portland district. The Multnomah District Corps of Engineers transferred Captain Williams and the *Michie* crew to the dredge *Biddle* and the *Michie* went into lay-up duty in Seattle, Washington.

The Seattle Engineer's office, at 2:00 p.m. on February 1, 1954, held a public auction and the *Michie* was sold to a South American country with the highest bid.

For the last time, the *Michie* went down the West Coast passing Astoria, Coos Bay and all the old familiar haunts, headed for her new destination with a foreign flag and crew. Though she has gone to a foreign land, the memories of those who served on her will remain until both are gone. ♦

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Note: Reference material is from the *Portland Guide*, Portland, OR, December 11, 1953 and personal recollections.

Charles E. Haddix has contributed other articles to Cumtux: "Reminiscences of an Old Astoria House," Summer, 1992, and "River Travel Memories on the Lower Columbia," Fall, 1992.

The strangest-looking boat afloat

# Pigboats on the Pacific

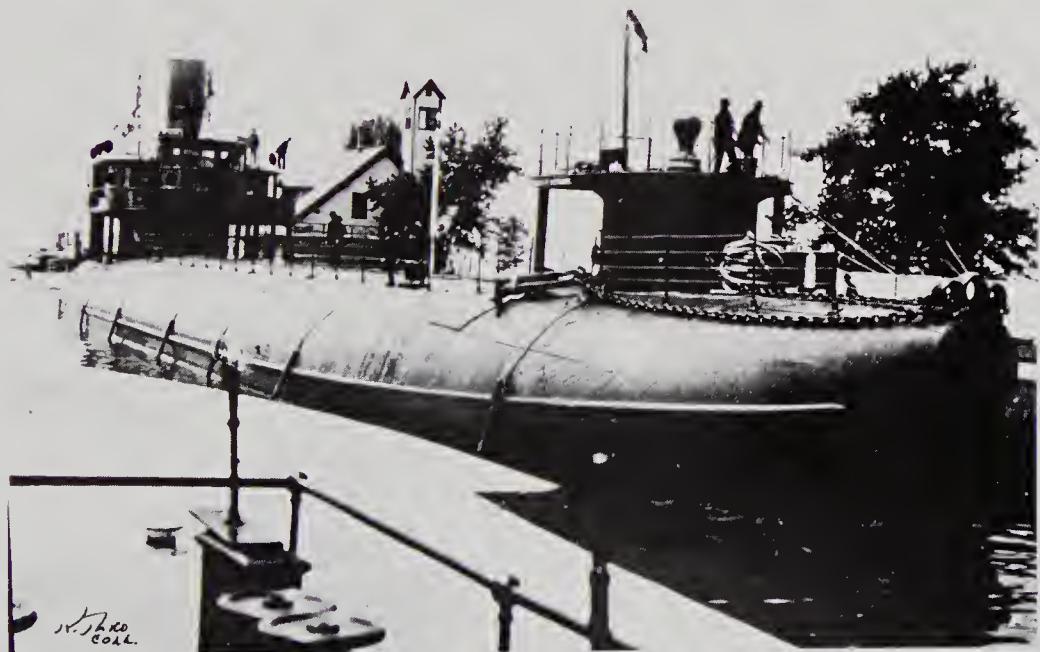
by Jim McCafferty

Tossing and heaving like a pig on the end of a rope, a strange looking ship entered the mouth of the Columbia River. She was under tow by the British steamer *Zambisi*, which had found her drifting, rudderless, a few miles off the coast. Just as she entered the roughest water of the bar, the towline parted, and the pig went staggering off towards the rocks. Quick work by Captain George W. Wood, the bar pilot guiding the *Zambisi*, reestablished the tow and brought her safely to dock at Astoria. Loungers and longshoremen stared at her in wonder: this was a ship?

She looked like a cigar log raft, but with a turret forward and a wheelhouse

aft--and a smokestack belching black coal smoke. The hull was steel, not logs after all. She was the *Charles W. Wetmore*, a Great Lakes invention getting a christening of salt water. Called a whaleback by her inventor, a doughty Scot by the name of Alexander McDougall, she was the first of her kind to venture out of the freshwater seas. The year was 1892.

The idea for a whaleback steamer came to Captain McDougall in a dream, so the story goes, in which he saw the cigar-shaped hull plowing undaunted through seas that sent other ships seeking a lee shore. The waves would roll easily over the low sloping hull while the wheelhouse, supported on



Courtesy of the Great Lakes Historical Society, Vermilion, Ohio

*The Charles W. Wetmore*

turrets, rode above it all. Watertight hatches gave access for cargo loading. The dream didn't go away when he awoke, and after many unsuccessful tries to sell Great Lakes shipowners of the idea, he scraped up enough money to build a whaleback tow barge, *Hull 101*. When it was launched, Mrs. McDougall commented wryly, "There goes our last dollar." And the shipowner standing next to her at the launching chuckled unsympathetically, "You call that thing a ship?" he said. "Looks more like a pig." The name stuck.

But the whaleback proved successful and Captain McDougall got the necessary financial backing--much of it from the Rockefeller interests--to start the American Steel Barge Company. From 1888 to 1898 he built over forty pigboats.

The *Wetmore* was one of three identical whaleback steamers launched in Duluth in 1891. She was 265 feet only with a 38-foot beam, net tonnage of 1075 and a dead-weight capacity of 3000 tons. Her triple-expansion engines and 14-foot screw drove her along at a quite respectable speed for a freighter.

On her maiden voyage, the *Wetmore* left Duluth loaded with 100,000 bushels of wheat for Liverpool. The wheat was lightered at Kingston, Ontario, and with Captain McDougall at the wheel, the whaleback successfully shot the rapids of the Saint Lawrence to the consternation of the betting public on the shores. Reloaded, the *Wetmore* plodded off to England. There she was such a sensation that she was opened to the public at a shilling a head, bringing in 115 pounds for the Liverpool Sailor's Orphanage.

After a record voyage back to the East Coast, she was loaded with cargo for the new city of Everett, Washington. On the 14,000-mile trip, she proved the economy of the whaleback design, burning twelve tons of coal per day, far less than that of conventional vessels of

the same cargo capacity. And the "roaring forties" and arctic blasts of Cape Horn left her undaunted--until she reached the Pacific Northwest Coast, that is, when a howling norther smote her a nasty blow and her rudder came unshipped. After drifting unmanagably for several days she was sighted and towed in to Astoria where repairs were quickly made and she proceeded to Everett to off load the materials to construct, of all things, a whaleback steamer!

The *City of Everett* was launched in 1894 by the newly formed Pacific Steel Barge company. Larger than the *Wetmore*, the *Everett* early in her career was chartered to carry a load of food to India, then suffering from one of her periodic famines. From Calcutta, she went through the Red Sea and became the first American steam vessel to pass through the Suez Canal and circumnavigate the globe. On the return trip to New York, she went to the aid of the steamer *Adriatic* in distress of Nantucket. The *Adriatic*'s master, however, was offended and refused to be towed by a lowly pigboat. The *Everett* stood by but before a revenue cutter arrived to take the tow, it was too late; the *Adriatic* went down. Thirty years later, in the Gulf of Mexico, the *City of Everett* was listed as "Missing, Presumed Lost, All Hands."

The *Charles W. Wetmore*, meanwhile, entered the Pacific Coast trade, carrying coal from Puget Sound to San Francisco, and having a rough time of it. There were few docks along the route that did not feel the impact of her pig-like snout, and several small ships were known to head in the opposite direction if they knew the *Wetmore* was about. Whalebacks were notorious for their lack of manageability under ballast, but the *Wetmore*'s erratic reputation could not stem from that exclusively. The final indignity came on September 8, 1892, less than a year

after her arrival on the West Coast. Under the command of Captain "Dynamite Johnny" O'Brien, en route from Tacoma to San Francisco in a dense fog, she came ashore on the North Spit at Coos Bay. Distress signals were blown but the fog prevented assistance from arriving until the next day, when she was firmly lodged parallel to the beach. Efforts to lighter her and possibly float her off were of no avail, and the crew abandoned her. But for a long time afterwards, she remained, high and dry but intact, on the beach, testimony to the integrity of the whaleback construction. If you're ever on North Spit at Coos Bay with a metal detector and the needle goes zinging to the peg, it's probably the *Wetmore*.

There are no more whalebacks operating anywhere on the seas or lakes today. The last pigboat, the *Meteor*, has been hauled up on shore at Barker's Island, Superior, Wisconsin, less than two miles from where she was launched in 1896. A permanent exhibit of the Head of the Lakes Museum, she is clean and freshly painted, and admired by thousands of visitors every year.

"It looks like a beached whale," they remark. ♦

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## Biography

Jim McCafferty retired seven years ago after a long and tedious career as a technical publications specialist for a large aerospace corporation in the San Fernando Valley. Shaking the dust of the valley from his heels he relocated to the wilds of Astoria where he contemplates the tall trees, the mighty Columbia River, and the rain coming down. He is working on his second novel, and his first, too, for that matter. His wife, Carel, and his dog, Mylo, tolerate his idiosyncrasies rather well.

*Editor's note: Carel McCafferty is a popular docent at the Heritage Center. She was recently honored for her years of volunteer work with the Girl Scouts.*

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*"Loch Ness" monsters on the Pacific Coast*

## Sea Serpent Stories

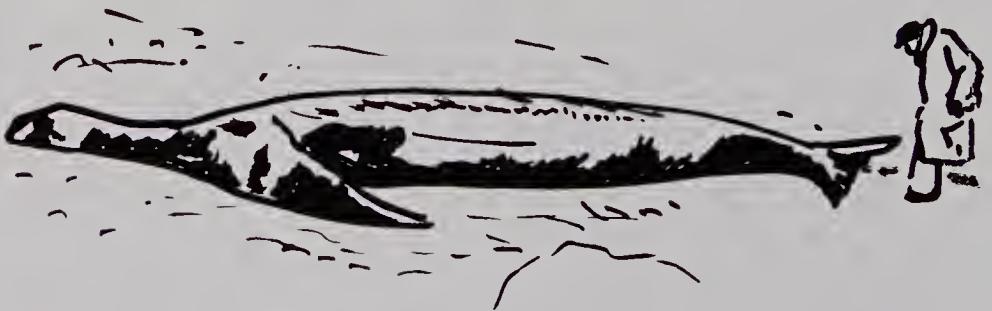
A huge monster suddenly appeared out of the water close enough to the lightship *Columbia* to frighten all the members of its crew, according to an article in the *Daily Astorian* of March 17, 1934. Captain J.F. Jensen of the lighthouse tender *Rose* revealed the story to the press and members of the lighthouse crew confirmed it. One witness was Sigfried Iverson of 372 Fifth Street in Astoria who was one of the two members who came in to port on the *Rose* for his regular vacation period. At first he hesitated to speak for fear of being ridiculed, but then described the strange event to reporters in the article that follows. He said that the animal was first noticed about noon three weeks earlier.

*It appeared near by the ship and swam around the vessel several*

*times propelling itself by a sort of wiggling motion, like a snake, and the use of two short flippers just back of its neck.*

The animal, Iverson said, appeared to be about 40 feet long and was dark in color. It had a large head and a thin neck, six to eight feet long. He said that during the lengthy period it was near the ship, it raised its head clear of the water several times. At one time, it came within thirty feet of the ship. Shown a picture of the sea animal cast up on a French beach recently, Iverson said it resembled the monster seen from the lightship although in the case of the one he had seen, the head was larger and the neck longer.

The animal finally swam out of sight and was not seen again,



*This camel-headed creature, twenty-five feet long and five feet around, washed ashore near Cherbourg, France, according to an article in the Astorian Budget on March 17, 1935. It was said to be similar to one seen off the Columbia River jetty a few days later. The drawing above was made from a photograph published on that date.*

*although Iverson reported that several times since, the crew members had seen black objects on the surface at some distance that resembled the marine freak, but which could not be definitely identified. Ragnor Anderson of 1836 Franklin, also a seaman on the lightship, confirmed the story.*

Three and a half years later, on October 23, 1937, Charles E. Graham, master of the Ilwaco trolling boat *Viv*, and two members of the crew, Lark Whealdon and Day Simmons, reported that the day before while out catching tuna about thirty miles off Tillamook Rock, they had seen a large animal with a huge head rising from a body like that of a horse. Graham said he had shouted to his crew that it was only a snag, then said that it was a sea elephant (a large member of the sea lion family). The crew jumped up on the roof of the pilot house to get a better look. As the boat cruised past within fifty feet of the monster, they estimated its visible length at thirty feet. The head was about three feet across, with grotesquely overgrown features like those of a camel. It had coal black eyes about two and a half inches across. A huge upper lip kept working over the mouth in a weird chewing motion. The monster snorted and licked its walrus-like chops. Simmons caught sight of a flipper. Just then it sank into the water, and all that remained were bubbles of air that continued to rise for a long time. A day later crews of two other boats reported seeing this serpent, the troller *Wegeon* of Ilwaco, manned by Al Caples and Wilbur Moshier and the *Alletta B*, a pilchard seiner, whose captain had hoped to lasso the animal and make a fortune.

A year and a half later, Chris Anderson and his crew of four aboard the halibut schooner *Argo* reported to the Customs officials their encounter

with a monster of the deep. About noon one April day on the halibut banks off the Columbia's mouth, the *Argo* was about to return to port with the hold filled with some eight thousand pounds of halibut. The lines were still in the water when Anderson noticed a ground line swaying crazily. Suddenly there arose about fifteen feet from the hull of the boat, a huge creature gorging on a twenty pound halibut. Anderson who had fished for twenty-five years, had never seen anything like it before. This monstrous creature was between forty-five and fifty feet long and about eight or ten feet in diameter. He described it as having a head like a camel's with fur that was coarse and gray. "Its head was far out of the water and it appeared to have no neck or shoulders, its head sloping down to its body like a fish." The crew members described it as having eyes like huge chunks of glass and a bent snout. One of the crew members wanted to poke the creature with a boat hook, but Anderson stopped him, fearing that it would retaliate. Members of the crew, Sig Halsan, John Groetting and the Johansen brothers, who all lived on Commercial Street in Astoria at the time, confirmed the story. A. Hansen of the schooner *Hermes* said he had seen a sea elephant the year before that almost matched the description of the monster Anderson and his crew had seen. He estimated that it was about twenty-five feet long and wondered if perhaps the crew had exaggerated the length of the animal they had seen. Anderson admitted that it was possible, but said that if what he had seen was a sea elephant, he hoped he would never see another one. ♦

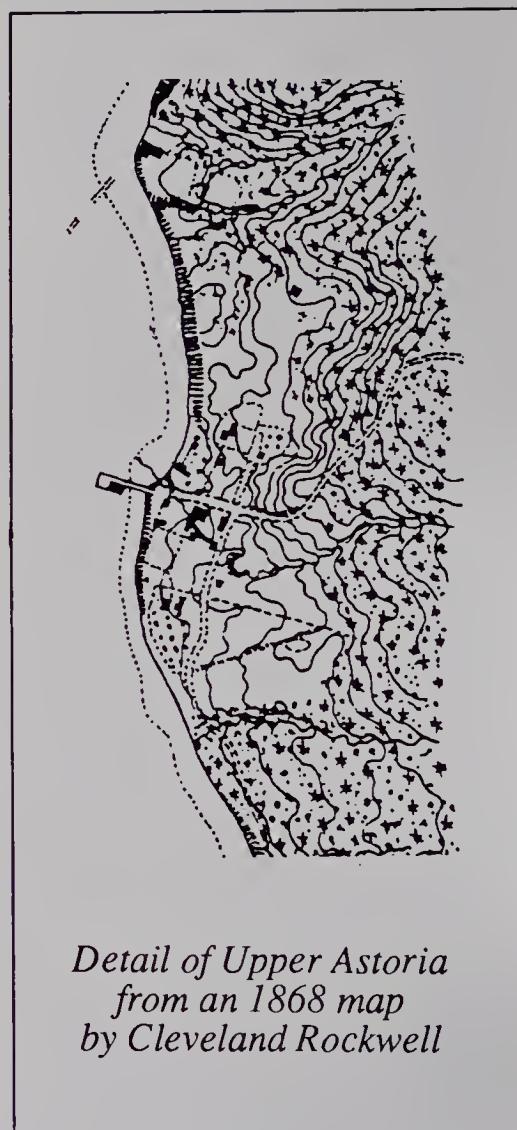


# Upper Astoria

Until 1878, Upper Astoria (also known as Uppertown) and Lower Astoria to the west (the main business area) were separated by Scow Bay which extended from about 23rd Street west to 18th. Stores, a post office, churches and a cemetery all served the needs of Upper Astoria because travel around or over Scow Bay was difficult. That changed in the summer of 1878 when a bridge was finally completed across the bay uniting the two Astoria's. This bridge became a part of Exchange Street, presently carrying traffic to the John Warren Field, the Columbia Memorial Hospital and the 4-H Fairgrounds, all built on old Scow Bay.

In the 1880's Norwegians and Swedes came to work in the canneries in Upper Astoria, first congregating in the boarding houses and later filling lots on the nearby hillsides with neat cottages while the successful Scandinavian businessmen, Gustav Holmes and Benjamin Young, built mansions here that nearly rivaled that of Capt. George Flavel in Lower Astoria.

The photographs on the next page and the centerfold are all taken from near the same spot on 38th Street in Upper Astoria and face west. The road running diagonally from bottom left to the center is Duane Street. The first street running horizontally is 37th. The next street west is 36th. The photo on the facing page at top shows the Norwegian-Danish Methodist-Episcopal Church (built in 1889) on the southwest corner of 37th and Duane. It "walked" to this location from the upper part of the same block in October, 1903. The school in Uppertown was built on the next block west; the first one was built by Truman Powers in 1876 and was 30 by 22 feet. A large hall (20 by 60) was added on to it in the fall of 1889. The large Adair School (top photo) was built



*Detail of Upper Astoria  
from an 1868 map  
by Cleveland Rockwell*

on the same site in 1893 and was demolished in 1927, replaced by Astor School on the uphill side of the same block. The Christian Leinenweber house was built in 1874 on the northwest corner of 35th and Franklin, seen to the left of the school in the top photo. The large house on the north side of Duane between 36th and 37th is the Benjamin Young house, built in 1888. To the west beyond it are the first two canneries built in Astoria, Badollet, in 1874 and Booth & Co. in 1875. The old



*Photo courtesy of the Astoria Public Library #H-50*

Custom House, near 33rd and the waterfront was torn down about 1901, and may be visible in the two earlier photos. The photo at top is much like the 1908 Sanborn Insurance map at the Astoria Public Library. Other items to note: The street bisecting the schoolhouse block disappeared in the top photo. Also, Leif Erickson Drive did not exist at the time of these photos.

See: "1690 Remembered," by

Grace Gramms Goodall in the Winter 1987 issue of *Cumtux* and "The Benjamin Young House," by Carolyn Young Ogilvie in the Summer 1986 issue.

Can you date the centerfold photograph from the information given above? See "Clatsop's Past" on the inside of the back cover for approximate dates. ♦



*CCHS Photo #4793-910*

# Upper Astoria



*See preceding page for description.*



*Photo courtesy of Bonnie Susan Oathes*



CCHS Photo #3713-349

*A sailing ship at anchor in the moonlit harbor at Astoria with Tongue Point in the background.*

A melodrama written in 1883

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## A Legend of the Columbia

by Adair Welcker

When the little town of Astoria, which lies beneath the hills on the left shore of the Columbia, was in its infancy, it was even more picturesque than it is at the present day. It was situated on a rising ground and close to the water's edge. The tall firs, hemlocks and spruce trees that surrounded the village protected it from the tempests of winter. Several miles across the blue waters of the Columbia were to be seen the tree-capped hills of what is now the Washington Territory shore.

The part of this little town which was formerly called by its eight or ten inhabitants, the Lower Town, was originally a trading post of the Hudson

Bay company and was first known by the name of Fort George. Here, thousands of miles from the civilized world, with the silence of a vast forest to the right of them and behind them; the silence and deep solitude of a mighty ocean to the left; with the silence of a grand river in front of them; here, all alone, lived a few waifs from the great living world.

As may be imagined, these beings who had wandered away to this western world belonged to a class who might be said to consist of the curiosities of humanity. Trappers, men who had escaped from justice, men imbibited by the strange chances and misfortunes of life-such men formed this community.

Amongst the last class was a curious old lawyer; a man possessed of profound ability. He had been brought up at the Inns Court of London. He had striven for many years in that great city, feeling, knowing his ability. In his attempt to obtain a foot-hold he had battled against poverty and misfortune, and had felt the pangs of that hope deferred which makes the heart sick; but the rushing stream of misfortune was too powerful for him with its terrible tide, and he lost his hold upon the world. He sought the peace and solitude of the great forest.

This last gentleman was the oracle of the little town, and many a lecture did he give to his audience there assembled, as he sat before the great stove in the Hudson's Bay store, and puffed the gray tobacco smoke from his meerschaum pipe in clouds above him; for it was around this stove that the whole city assembled whenever it rained, which happened at that time, nearly every day in the year. Around this great stove in the old log-wood store this whole city on these numerous occasions chewed and smoked tobacco, and told hideous yarns.

And all the while the Columbia with the rain ever falling on its smooth surface, rolled on in grim silence to the sea.

When such a strange event as the appearance of a white sail upon the ocean happened, the quiet little community would be thrown into a state of enormous excitement. Then would the members of the community lay down their tobacco pipes, the quids would be cast aside, the people would put on their rubber-boots, their oil-skin hats and coats, and the whole community, followed by the sheep, cows and dogs of the village, would go down to the beach; the great lifeboat of the company would be manned and the crew would prepare to pilot the ship into port. But such an occasion as this

occurred only at very long intervals, indeed.

There were Indians there in those days, but not one is now left to tell of the race that is gone. They were a quiet, peaceable and idle race. They lived chiefly by salmon-fishing, and were not of a warlike disposition.

The little town of Astoria had been sleeping in the quiet manner which we have described, disturbed only by the cry of the panther and the howl of the wolf, when a great commotion was caused by the report that there was to be an increase in the population. A young clerk was to be sent out from England. the sale of blankets to the Indians had increased of late and the company had come to the conclusion that an additional clerk was necessary. An old trapper had been seen coming around Tongue point in a canoe, one day, and he had brought the news from another station placed by the same company far up the Columbia. For many days the community smoked more violently as they discussed the news around the great stove in the old low-roofed store.

One day a sail was seen beyond Sand Island and at about 4 o'clock in the afternoon the ship anchored in front of the town, and the new clerk was rowed ashore.

It was not long before the town became aware of the fact that this gentleman had been married to a lovely English girl the day before he left England. He had left his young wife in there and had come to this far land to work for the company for a few years until he had saved money enough to go home and live with his wife in ease. It was a hard trial to his young wife; but poverty was his master. He had thought first of delaying the day of marriage until his return, but this had already been delayed, and both were too deeply in love to reason. Instead of reasoning they got married. A few hours of exquisite bliss and they parted.

The white sails of the vessel which had brought the young husband to Astoria were spread and slowed around to catch the wind; the vessel sailed away on her homeward voyage; the citizens watched the sails until they became a white speck on the ocean, and then became undistinguishable from the distant clouds on the horizon.

The new member soon settled down and became like the rest of the community, and it was not long before he acquired those habits which were common to all. At first he was the principal speaker at the old store and would describe to the little band of listeners the great and busy world so far away. Even the dogs of the village would sit on their haunches and look up to his face with a look of seeming interest as he spoke. And one time he told of the sweet gentle wife that he left behind him, and as he described her in glowing terms, his listeners leaned forward with their elbows on their knees, and one old pilot took off his hat and laid it on the floor as the young man described the lovely face like that of an angel, and spoke of the golden hair and the eyes like the blue of Heaven.

But after a while, a deep melancholy took possession of him and he hardly spoke to the rest. And he was often seen to wander up and down the beach in the evening after the day's work was done. He became the subject of conversation, and the villagers all solemnly agreed--and especially did the old lawyer conclude that he was out of his element, that that was no place for him.

Still the days dragged by and the rain came drearily down; still the Indians in their canoes paddled their way over the smooth surface of the river, and still the river carried Old Time in his invisible boat down to the ocean.

One day an Indian came into the

store and informed the people therein that a big canoe was out on the ocean. They went out, and sure enough on the far horizon, and a "leettle to port of Sand Island," as a rough old sailor expressed it, was a sail. The sail moved across the mouth of the river, and many were the conjectures as to whether she would come into the river or not. At last the question was settled when the vessel rounded the north end of the sand-spit on the bar. In two hours the vessel, with all sails set, passed within a quarter of a mile of the town, and went on up the river. The vessel was a beautiful clipper packet, one of the splendid line of packets that sailed between this country and France fifty years ago, one of those vessels that were fitted up like a palace, that were built of oak and pine and were fastened with copper bolts. This was the *Silvia de Gras*, and she had a majestic appearance as she moved with all sails set onward up the Columbia.

Every spy-glass in the city was leveled at the vessel as she glided onward. A lady on the poop-deck was waving a handkerchief, and a spy-glass showed to the young clerk that this was the wife he had left in old England. The day had been a bright one, and the sun was sinking at the mouth of the river through a heaven of golden clouds.

The young husband got into the life-boat with four companions and rowed up the river after the vessel. The sun sank, and the clouds of gold in the west took a crimson hue.

It was suddenly noticed that the vessel had stopped. She had struck upon a hidden rock. The vessel remained in the same position without moving. The boat reached her, and the young husband seized upon a rope that was hanging from the bow of the vessel in order to keep the boat in position. The ebb-tide was rushing rapidly around the bow of the ship forming a whirlpool in its course. During the voyage from England the young wife had had a

constant presentiment that she would find that her husband was dead, for she had never heard from him, and this had induced her to go in search of him and now after a long sea voyage which had lasted thirteen months, she, with inexpressible joy, saw his face again.

The young man, while holding the boat in position, was looking up into her face, and had just commenced to speak to her, when the tide coming around the bow of the ship caused the boat to lurch to one side, and he was thrown into the river. He lost his hold upon the rope and was carried down with the tide. One shriek from the young girl and she fell insensible to the deck. The young man rose to the surface, sank, rose again, and yet a third time, and was then lost to sight.

The young girl was taken ashore in an insensible condition. Some men living in a log-cabin deserted it and gave it up to her. An old woman who had worked for some of the officers of the company, attended her during her sickness, which lasted two weeks. Day after day the rough inhabitants would come stealthily to the old cabin, lay their hats on the ground and wait silently until the old Indian woman happened to come to the door, when she would tell them how the young girl was. They would go away, then, shaking their heads mournfully as they went. During most of this time she was delirious. The long continued anxiety, followed by the unexpected sight of the one she loved, and that followed by his death at the moment of her greatest happiness, had been more than her gentle nature could stand. In her delirium - so the oldest inhabitants say - she seemed to think that she was on an island in the middle of the ocean, and that her husband was being torn from her arms by savages who intended to murder him.

But death cast his soft mantle of eternal sleep over the poor weary form

at last, for one evening, as the sun was sinking down through the sky of fire that hung over the mouth of the great river, a ray of sunlight coming through the old log-cabin - a ray which had been resting on the poor weary face and playing in the hair of gold, grew dim, and more dim, until it had gone, and the night had come, and to her the night of death!

The pretty eyes, blue as the blue light of heaven, had lost their look of weariness and their look of sorrow forever. There was no more suffering, no more pain for her. She was dead.

The next morning the body of the young husband drifted up on the beach.

Preparations were made for the funeral. Two canoes were placed side by side, and boards were placed between, forming a platform. On this the community placed green boughs. The carpenters of the packet ship made two pine coffins. The remains of the young people were placed on these, and they rested side by side above the platforms on the canoes. This was taken in tow by the lifeboat, and the inhabitants took canoes and the ship's company their boats, and this little company rowed slowly and silently around Smith's point and up Young's river. A number of Indians in their canoes followed grimly and silently in the rear.

Near a narrow gorge in this river, beneath the shadow of tall fir trees was found a little green spot, and here the grave was dug. The oldest men in the community said the services, and the unfortunate young pair were lowered to their resting places.

The hull of the old *Silvia de Gras* withstood the shock of the wind and the weather for many years. It was said that people sailing by the ship at midnight in their boats heard the despairing cry of the young girl, and on moonlit nights others have been seen pulling on the ropes of the vessel. But those

mysterious visitors are to be seen no more, for the noble vessel had at length given up the battle with time. A few years ago the last remnant of the *Sylvia de Gras* was carried away in the dark, rushing tide of the river.

By Adair Welcker in the *Sacramento Record Union* newspaper. This article was reprinted in the *Daily Astorian* on July 3, 1883. (The original spelling has been retained.) Though the author of this melodrama signed her name only as Adair Welcker, it is believed that she was Kate Adair Welcker, daughter of General John Adair who was the first Customs Collector at Astoria, arriving here in 1848. A photograph of the author and her family is in the Winter, 1992 issue of *Cumtux* on page 10 and a related article is in the Fall, 1981 issue on page 20. General Adair's donation land claim stretched from about 33rd to 47th Streets, overlooking the wreck of the *Sylvia de Gras*. The story of the young lovers is an invention of the author and liberties were taken in relating the events that actually occurred. The *Sylvia de Gras* did hit a rock ledge in the Columbia River just west of Tongue Point in 1849, but it happened while she was at anchor awaiting a pilot to aid in crossing the Columbia River bar. When the wooden-stocked anchor was lifted, the ship drifted up against a submerged rock. The ship, heavily loaded with lumber, was wedged so tightly, it could not be freed. There it remained for some fifty years before

its removal as it was a hazard to shipping. Over these years, the live oak, locust, and teak wood from which this luxury packet boat was built, was salvaged and fashioned into many items. Eliza McKean Hustler reported in the December 22, 1921 issue of the *Astoria Evening Budget* that a chair she owned (now at the Heritage Center) was made from the timbers of the *Sylvia de Gras*. Another item from this same source is a gavel once owned by Mary Kinney, now in the possession of Gordon Kinney, author of the story, "Franklin Miracle" following. ♦



*Teak wood chair from the Sylvia de Gras.  
The seat cover is a replacement.*

A journey backwards down the Astoria hills

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# The Franklin Miracle

by Gordon D. Kinney

**F**or several years in the late 1920s, my family lived two houses from the intersection of 8th Street and Kensington Avenue. In one corner of our large lot, a one-car garage stood on a slope, its entrance facing Kensington.

When I was about six years old, I made close friends with the neighborhood boys. We were a curious three; we would spend hours exploring vacant lots, woods, and abandoned houses.

One day we were bored and at a loss for something to do. I casually mentioned that my father had recently purchased a used Franklin sedan. At that time, the air-cooled engine was considered an engineering marvel. Many people thought this four-door sedan was the last word in luxury. Naturally my friends wanted to see it. And so, puffing up my chest, I told them they could not only look at our car, but, perhaps, climb into the front seat.

The two large wooden hinged garage doors were fastened together with a hasp and wooden pin. We ran to the entrance and pulled the pin. Muscle and determination helped us to swing the heavy doors open.

Once inside the garage, we marveled at the sight, for this car was a beautiful piece of machinery.

We walked around it, feeling and touching metal and glass. We tried the front door handles. To our surprise, they swung open. Dad seldom locked

the car. My pals asked me if they could sit in the front seat. I said, "Sure, why not?" In a second, we clambered into the car and onto the seat, each of us taking turns steering the car, all the while making "hrumm. . . mm" noises. Then we began playing with the brake system, clutch, and gearshift, all the while joyously jumping up and down.

Pretense became reality. The vehicle suddenly began to move backwards out of the garage and down the winding, graveled roadway. Somehow our gyrations and manipulations had freed the emergency brake and moved the gearshift into neutral. Too frightened to jump from the car, we frantically tried to reach the brake pedal by sliding down in the front seat and extending our short legs. Failing to halt the car, we dropped down to the floor and pushed on the brake pedal. It was all so useless. By this time, my father's beloved car was running faster and faster toward Kensington Avenue.

Somehow, we managed to roll down the front windows and screamed for help. Several mothers looked at us with astonishment and ran for assistance. Hopefully, our runaway could be stopped on Kensington.

To our horror, the Franklin reached a descent into 9th Street and rolled merrily on backwards.

With a sudden jolt, our unscheduled trip ended at the foot of 9th and Kensington. Our Franklin had not only remained upright, but had



*Photo courtesy of the author*

*Gordon D. Kinney, seated at the right on the bottom step beside his cousin, attends a party with three of his friends.*

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rolled downhill all the way in the curb lane.

We were immediately surrounded by adults, who were amazed to see us alive. To their disbelief, they found three frightened little boys, whose hands and feet were clinging to every convenient hold on the dashboard and seat. Our faces and hands were pasty white and our voices silent.

We were given severe scoldings by our mothers. Later when my father returned home, I anticipated a spanking. But somehow, when he had listened to my story, his anger subsided and I received only a scolding. I guess he felt that I had learned a good lesson, considering we had survived the ride without a scratch. Our miracle auto also came through without a dent.

Some time later, a second Franklin of ours broke loose while it was parked at the Clatsop Crest rest stop. This time no one was in the car. Dad shouted for help and with the aid of another motorist, chased the wayward car down and around the tricky "S" curves on the way to Portland. Within a mile or two, our car stopped running backwards. A flat section of the highway halted its flight. Again, the Franklin remained upright and in the curb lane.

They don't make cars like this anymore, even the four-wheel drives. ♦

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Gordon D. Kinney is also the author of "Tales of Truth and Consequence," in the Spring, 1993 issue of *Cumtux*.

# Chinese-Americans in Astoria, Oregon

1880 - 1930

by Cynthia J. Marconeri

With its unique traditions, the Chinese Community in Astoria from its very inception helped to formulate a special blend of Scandinavian and Oriental cultures into a city often described by tourists as diverse and original. How and why the Chinese came here is a story in itself and explains much of what their lives became in this little fishing town on the north Oregon coast.

In an attempt to escape harsh political and economic conditions in China during the late 1840's, Chinese free laborers, known as coolies, came in ever increasing waves to California in the mid-1850's to participate in gold-field speculation, building of the first transcontinental railroad, and the profitable retail trades of San Francisco and other towns. Most hoped to become wealthy and return to their families to live a life of ease. Americans observed the Chinese workers to be thrifty, industrious, and docile. As in other areas of the country experiencing an influx of immigrants, they were welcomed as a source of cheap labor for an expanding frontier. This receptive attitude prevailed until America landed in the great depression of the 1870s and then all foreigners were treated with more intolerance and suspicion. The completion of the railways in California did not bring the anticipated prosperity many were counting on, including the Chinese. In fact, land values fell and many white

and Chinese laborers were thrown out of work. What before Americans had considered admirable Chinese traits and habits, now became suspect. They were criticized for keeping to themselves, refusing to accept Americanization, smoking opium, gambling, and consorting with prostitutes. Violence was directed at the Chinese at the height of the depression in 1877: Chinese businesses were attacked, queues snipped with scissors, Oriental labor boycotted, and some Chinese beaten and murdered. What was then an economic problem quickly became political with the federal government now determined to rid America of the Chinese. In 1880, the federal government signed a treaty with China giving the United States the right to limit, but not prohibit the immigration of Chinese laborers into this country. To this end, Congress suspended Chinese immigration with the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 for ten years. Each time it was about to expire, it was renewed again and finally extended indefinitely in 1902 (Clyde and Beers 158-160).

This Exclusion Act only managed to slow immigration, rather than to stop it. Other factors contributed to a decline in the Chinese population. When the economy went into periodic recessions, jobs became scarce and many returned home for good. Those determined to come to the United States gained entry through Mexico or Canada. Others used



CCHS Photo #978-902

*Astoria's Chinatown in 1892.  
Photo taken from the southwest corner of 7th and Bond streets.*

forged documents. There always were exceptions to the rule as in the case of students, scholars, and wealthy merchants who managed to enter the country under special status agreements (Tung 32). Those Chinese who were legal residents and wanted to return to China for a visit were given certificates verifying their status which entitled them to re-enter the United States. These certificates were easily forged and reproduced in Astoria's Chinatown for eventual sale to Chinese in Hong Kong, the going rate being \$150.00 for men and \$100.00 for women (*Daily Astorian* 26 Aug. 1885). Congress eventually repealed the Exclusion Act in 1943, although the Chinese were allowed very small quotas in comparison with European immigrants. The quota established was 105 Chinese each year which was calculated as 1/6 of 1% of the resident Chinese population as of the 1920 census (Tung 32). It is interesting to note that the actual decline of the Chinese population in the Astoria area occurred in conjunction with the decline of the canneries, and the wide-spread use of automated packing equipment (Peterson 8). Those Chinese who returned to China were not replaced by local residents, but by the Japanese who by 1911 had supplanted them in the

canneries and were not under the same immigration restrictions until 1924 (Friday, June 1984:56).

Seeking employment after the California land bust, many Chinese migrated to Oregon on their way to the gold fields of Canada. The gold finds along the Rogue River in southern Oregon, and the new salmon-canning industry at the mouth of the Columbia River also looked appealing (Friday, March 1982:7). The canneries were the big attraction in the Astoria area, and with the daily arrival of Chinese workers, a male dominated Chinese community was established. The men worked long, hard hours and slept in bunk houses provided by cannery owners. Often when the fish were running and the need arose, they were rousted out of bed by foremen who stood to lose money if daily quotas were not met. Chris Friday graphically describes this as follows:

*Standing all day in rubber boots amongst the fish entrails for such long hours resulted in painfully swollen ankles and legs for many. Some workers became so afflicted by severe swelling that they had to have their boots cut from their legs at the end of the day. When these men were aroused the next morning to continue their painful work*

*routine, they "cried like babies."*

Some of the workers sought refuge from the pains of their work in opium, and addiction was commonplace. For those addicted to opium, the long day was unbearable. By the afternoon their hands became shaky and their legs less stable. Some hurried to their bunks for a pipe and a quick rest during a "coffee break." Thus fortified, they were able to work for the rest of the day until the evening when they returned to their bunks and their opium (Friday, June:40). When they saved enough money, some returned to China; others were determined to bring their families to America. Unfortunately, the Immigration Act (prior to the Exclusion Act of 1882) did not allow families to enter the United States (*Daily Astorian* 26 April 1973), so these hard-working Chinese men sent money home and hoped for a way to bring their wives and children to Astoria. Eventually, by the late 1880's, several families were established and the Chinese workers were able to move out of the company housing and settle in an area bordered by Bond, Astor, and Commercial Streets near the canneries in which they worked. Support services began to appear with the presence of barbers, doctors, merchants, and restaurant operators, and thus a community was born (Friday, March:7). Chinese gardens became popular and profitable. There were four located in Astoria and the owners not only grew vegetables, but raised hogs and chickens. Produce could be bought directly from the gardens, or from the local grocery stores. The Chinese gardeners were very trusting. If someone came to their garden and no one was there, he would often find a jar and a note saying to take the produce he needed and leave his money in the jar (*Daily Astorian* 26 April 1973). One can't imagine that working today. An interesting story

surfaced in connection with the raising of chickens in Astoria. It seems that local citizens were concerned over what appeared to be a shortage of chickens in the city. This was due to many causes, but city officials suspected some of the shortage was a direct result of a demand for chickens in Chinese oaths, or as was written:

*Every time a Chinaman makes solemn oath in the giving of testimony in court or before an officer, he has to cut a chicken's head off, this being the most approved form of affirmation.*

Apparently five fowls were sacrificed the day before this appeared in the local paper, and five more were to be killed the following day, in the interests of "Mongolian justice" (*Daily Astorian* 13 Sept. 1888). The officers of the court then took the chickens home to be cooked and eaten.

In addition to the legal businesses then flourishing in Astoria's Chinatown, there were also those illegal and questionable activities that made local officials nervous. Since there was still an inequity in numbers of Chinese men and women in Astoria, the young men working in the canneries turned to prostitutes who came from San Francisco and became part of a permanent association of "working girls" living and carrying on their business in the bordellos of Astor Street. Gambling and opium dens were also popular spots for what little recreation they had. The local city fathers worried about these establishments and sought to close them down periodically. The *Morning Astorian* in October of 1919 reported on the necessity of dismantling the gambling dens by taking down the heavy doors, and eliminating the maze of halls and signal bells existing in these buildings (Oct. 7). A grand jury

raid on an opium den revealed two Chinese gentleman in a stupor on cots in a smoke-filled room behind bolted doors. This lead the city health officer to request an ordinance to require adequate ventilation in all buildings in the downtown area (Oct. 28). As the community grew, the Chinese took it upon themselves to deal with their needs by the formation of "tong" societies. A tong was essentially an American invention. These clubs, similar to fraternal organizations, were organized by Chinese residents to help newly-arriving Chinese to adjust to life in America. Tong members assisted with housing and loans. The meeting places provided social and religious opportunities. Since police protection was not available to the Chinese, the tongs helped the community band together for collective security. It was only later that the tongs became involved in gambling, opium, and prostitution. The famous tong wars of the 1920's arose from jurisdictional disputes, gambling, and arguments over women. These altercations stopped when the Chinese Benevolent Society stepped in to arbitrate. (*Daily Astorian* 26 April 1973).

Isolation of the Chinese from the rest of the community, basically Scandinavian, stemmed from resentment of the Chinese in the work force, suspicion of their culture, and basic misunderstandings. In 1918, the mayor of Astoria raised money from local Chinese to go to Washington D.C. and lobby for a repeal of the Exclusion Act, claiming a wartime emergency caused a shortage of laborers to work in the canneries. The government disagreed stating there was no shortage, just a problem of distribution of workers (*Morning Astorian* 10 Sept. 1918). The local unions wanted to keep the number of Chinese in the canneries down since the Chinese would work for next to nothing and thus were popular with cannery owners, replacing white

workers who wanted more for their labor and were more likely to strike (Friday, June:26).

White residents also felt threatened by Chinese customs which seemed bizarre and puzzling. Many a labor contract contained a stipulation that if a Chinese worker died, his bones would be returned to China. The unusual attention paid to the body of the deceased was often commented upon. The local newspaper reported that every eight years the bones of deceased Chinese would be removed from graves in Oregon and returned to China "for, say the Chinese, when the remains of members of their race rest with their ancestors in the celestial empire, peace, happiness, contentment is the lot of the departed" (*Morning Astorian* 28 Dec. 1928). In that year, 614 bodies were collected from Portland, Astoria, Salem, and La Grande. White residents also raised their eyebrows at the strange dress and bound feet of the Chinese women. The loose-fitting garments and sandal-type shoes of the Chinese were however, probably no more strange than the large, feathered hats and bustles worn by American women. The newspaper also reported that Chinese women were instructed not to look when washing their unbound feet as this would cause them to "grow" (*Daily Astorian* 26 April 1973).

In one respect, the Chinese community and the rest of Astoria were in complete agreement. The Chinese needed to learn English. The Chinese who came to America placed great value on education as a means of competing and getting ahead in this country. However, they were also concerned about preserving their heritage and so a Chinese School was established on Bond Street. Flora Chan remembers attending regular public schools during the day and then the Chinese school at night from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. There she learned Chinese character writing, language, and



CCHS Photo #7758-534

The Bing Kong Bow Leong Tong met in this ornate room on the 2nd floor of a building in Astoria on the south side of Bond between 6th and 7th streets. John Lum, whose parents operated the Lum Quing Grocery next door, remembers visiting this room as a child. He believes that the photo above commemorates an occasion which drew tong members from Portland sometime in 1924 or 1925. Seated fourth from the left is Wong Lam, Chan Dogg, unknown, and Tong Chan, three important labor contractors on the West Coast.



CCHS Photo #5192-540

customs. Eight grades were taught by one instructor. Before a student was granted a diploma, his exams were sent to the Chinese council, who then turned them over to the Chinese Ambassador, whether the children passed or not. Those who passed often ended up working for the consulate or in the mercantile businesses. This school and others that followed were sponsored by wealthy Chinese merchants, but unfortunately they were not able to stay open for more than a few years (*Daily Astorian* 17 Sept. 1913). Chinese children, polite and industrious students in the public schools, learned to speak English very quickly and helped their parents communicate with the white population.

The Astoria Chinatown benefitted from many of the same cultural activities carried on in the Chinese communities of more metropolitan areas i.e. Portland and San Francisco. The Chinese cannery crews forgot their aches and pains at the local Chinese theater watching Cantonese Operas (Friday, June:44). Cannery operators also made concessions for Chinese holidays, which often involved "firecrackers, kite flying, feasts, and speeches." The rest of the community didn't always understand the reasoning behind these work-free days as it detracted from the vital work of packing salmon, but they accepted it as a need to "appease" the incomprehensible Chinese (Friday, June:45).

In spite of these resentments and misunderstandings, by the early 1900's the Chinese families who remained tried to participate in the community and win the favor of its residents. They participated in the 1903 regatta, contributed to fund-raising drives, and attended the Baptist Church on the edge of Chinatown (Peterson 8). The women of the Baptist Church invited the Chinese women to attend to learn English and the Chinese community

responded by sending their children to Sunday School for the same purpose (*Daily Astorian* 26 April 1973). The local newspaper reflected favorably on these developments which helped to promote acceptance of the Chinese by the rest of the population. The Chinese learned to step in wherever they were accepted. The Hip Sing Tong Society invited Mayor Harley, Chief of Police Nace Grant, and a reporter from the Astoria Evening Budget to attend a New Year's celebration. The tong members politely offered forks when it became apparent the guests could not master chopsticks and after an evening of good conversation and rice wine, one inebriated tong member announced to his guests:

*Me for Harley all the time.  
Astoria him likey good steets:  
muchy mud no good. Publick  
market all same big place, makee  
fine business. Poor man getta  
more. Harley, he save workeman  
you bet. Big chiefee, him Nace  
Grant, him straight, strong man  
(Astoria Evening Budget 29 Jan.  
1917).*

Minnie Lum or "Auntie Min", as she was popularly known by most friends, came from Portland in 1922 on the advice of a friend to set up shop as a hairdresser. She had been promised a job by a local resident. Auntie Min claimed she could not find a job in Portland because they were not hiring Chinese in the beauty shops. Whether this was due to overt racism, or remnants of the postwar depression, we really don't know. Anyway, Auntie Min arrived to find that the job offered no longer existed. According to Fred Andrus, who interviewed Min before she died, she was befriended by a local seamstress, Mrs. Mary Elias. Min accompanied Mary on a visit to one of the bordellos on Astor Street. The local

madam (Sylvia, by name) upon learning of Min's occupation asked her to style her hair. The other residents liked what they saw and so Auntie Min's career was born (Andrus 14 April 1978). Min made trips to the local jail on Fridays to fix the hair of the "working girls" who had been arrested and were awaiting freedom. It seems they were often released on Fridays so they would be available for weekend duty. On one visit to one of the bordellos, Min was interrupted in her conversation with the madam of the house by a loud ring at the door. The madam quickly shoved Min into the bathroom and deposited all the establishment's hidden liquor in there with her, with the instructions to pour it all down the toilet if she heard a knock at the bathroom door. Well . . . . Auntie Min wasn't about to go to jail for violating prohibition, so she quickly dumped it all down the toilet without waiting for the "signal." It turned out the young man at the door had rung the "wrong" bell, instead of the one reserved for customers. The ringing of the "wrong" bell would indicate to anyone inside that the police were demanding entry. When the madam returned to the bathroom, she must have been greatly surprised to see Auntie Min surrounded by emptied bottles feeling "flushed" with success.

The Chinese of Astoria probably suffered less than (the Chinese) in larger cities in regards to racist and discriminatory acts. From what I can tell, other than periodic grumbling from the labor unions and those campaigning against the opium and gambling dens, Astorians certainly tolerated and accepted the Chinese community as a whole. In later years, Chinese businessmen were well-respected as community leaders and their families have greatly contributed to the economic and social well-being of this community.

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# Cemeteries and Gravesites in Astoria

by Liisa Penner

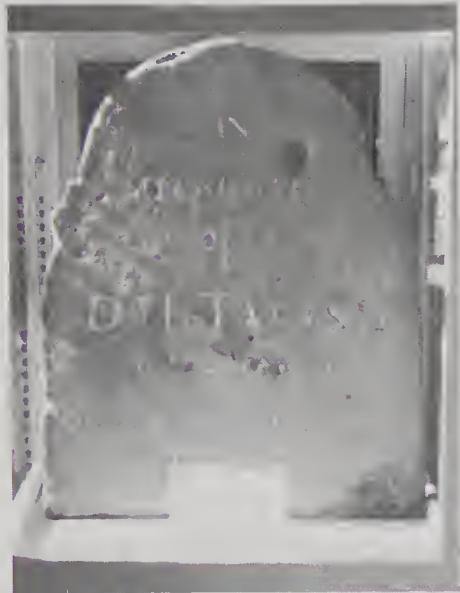
A workman, helping to level the street and install planking on Exchange at its intersection with 17th Street in late May of 1878, stopped digging when his shovel exposed some human bones. The Superintendent of Streets was called over to examine the find and continued the digging himself. When he was through, the remains of six bodies had been dug up. There were signs of coffins, but the bodies had been buried so long ago that the coffins had completely decayed. One of the skulls appeared to have been cut by an axe. The opinion of the local townspeople was that these men were early furtraders. A letter by Roger Tetlow in the *Daily Astorian* in 1976 may explain what happened. He quotes Peter Corney who wrote in 1821,

*After we left (November 1814), a blacksmith and two men were sent from the post to burn charcoal. They [the Indians] commenced about them, apparently in a friendly manner, but the moment an opportunity offered, they took the axes belonging to the party, attacked them furiously, cutting and mangling them most barbarously. The natives made off, taking the axes with them. The bodies were found the next morning. An inquiry was set on foot for the authors of this outrage. King Concomly offered his services to find them. By the help of presents and threats, two of the men were recognized. They were led out*

*blindfolded to be shot. The bodies of the Indians were taken down to the wharf and exposed for several days, when their friends were allowed to carry them away.*

Perhaps the furtraders, who were attacked by the Indians, were the same found buried here. That more men were found than mentioned in Peter Corney's story may be accounted for by the fact that this area was a part of the original cemetery for the furtraders at Fort George (Astoria). The newspaper account for 1878 also reports that, "on a lot near where this excavating is being done, is the site of the grounds where some of the [fur] company were interred, (McTavish and others), and the relics of two headstones placed there in 1814 remain to mark their graves."

Donald McTavish, Alexander Henry, Jr. and two other men were drowned on May 22, 1814 while crossing the Columbia River and sometime later buried southeast of Fort George. The location of the cemetery was platted thirty years later as Block 120, bounded by Duane and Exchange and 16th and 17th Streets. Part of the cemetery extended under 16th Street. This cemetery was on the shore of the Columbia River. Subsequent filling pushed this shoreline some two blocks to the north. According to Alta Schalk Weir, in her listing of Clatsop County cemeteries dating to about 1961, many persons then still remembered seeing



*The 1814 tombstone of Donald McTavish can be seen at the Heritage Center.*

the graves on this block. In the basement of one house on the south side of the block there were reported to be two headstones with inscriptions. These stones were knocked down, but not taken away and the building was erected over them. What happened to them when the building was moved and the armory was unknown.

The Astoria City Hall, now the home of the Clatsop County Historical Society, was built in 1905 on the west end of Block 120. Twenty years later, the City of Astoria purchased the lots east of the City Hall. Judge J.Q.A. Bowlby, at that time, proposed that the bodies in these lots be dug up and removed to another cemetery. But since at least twelve feet of fill covered the old graves and their tombstones and there was nothing visible to mark their exact location, the effort was deemed impractical. The 1908 Sanborn Insurance map shows that Duane Street was built twenty feet higher than the north part of this block, so even more

than twelve feet of fill may have been added before the armory was built on this block. The bodies are, no doubt, still there.

In 1905, workmen, who were preparing the ground in order to build a new hospital on the west side of 16th Street between Exchange and Duane, discovered the skull of a white man who apparently had been buried for a long time. This building has since been torn down, but the foundation remains.

This vicinity may also be the place that Chief Comcomly was buried, as three early sources, according to Ruby and Brown, list his burial as "behind" Fort George. The fort occupied portions of the two blocks immediately to the west of Block 120 and is believed to have been centered near where the intersection of 15th and Exchange is today.

Another burial in the Fort George Cemetery may have been that of Princess Sunday, daughter of the Indian Chief Comcomly, who married Archibald McDonald, Chief Factor of Fort George. She died in 1824 just four days after giving birth to their son, Ranald McDonald, the well-known adventurer whose story is told in an earlier issue of *Cumtux*.



*Luster pitcher found in grave goods. Donated to Clatsop County Historical Society by Allen Cellars.*

An article in the newspaper from June, 1875 tells of the discovery of what the reporter terms a former "Queen of Society about Astoria." They exhumed her "*remains, buried long ago with all her little trinkets by her side.. The trinkets are in a good state of preservation, beads and buttons, bright as a dollar, in great quantities were found, and relic hunters are in high glee.*"

Just east of the center of the block on the north side of Exchange between 14th and 15th streets is a spot where a house was built in 1885 by Robert Carruthers. When the workers dug into the earth for the foundations, the grave of an Indian child was discovered. The grave goods included a six-inch tall luster pitcher commemorating the marriage of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert in 1840, thus helping to date the death of the child. The pitcher was filled with blue Indian beads. Also found were cedar posts believed to be part of the Hudson's Bay Company stockade.

A couple blocks away on the south side of Exchange opposite 13th Street is the base of a hill that once rose from the shore of a bay which extended this far south and from 9th to 14th Streets. A teenage boy was scratching at the hillside here when he discovered a skull that was fairly well preserved. Digging further, he found the entire skeleton. It had been buried a long time, as a root of a fir tree, six inches in diameter, had grown across the body. It was noted that this appeared to be the burial of an Indian, but there were none of the usual grave goods associated with the body. This area was a short distance east of the location of the Indian village shown in the drawings of Astoria in 1811 and 1813.

In 1895, one block directly up the hill at 1337 Franklin, a basement was being dug out underneath Capt. Hiram

Brown's house, the oldest surviving house in Astoria, when workers uncovered the remains of four men, along with a headstone with the letter "W" cut in the stone with some rough instrument.

On 10th Street near the corner of Exchange, on the edge of what used to be the bay, some badly decayed bones were found while workers graded the street in 1903. They were judged to have been buried for a long time. Twelve years earlier sewer diggers working on 10th Street discovered the petrified bones of a man that appeared to be larger than normal.

Engineer A.S. Tee was surveying in July, 1897 at the corner of 9th and Jerome when he discovered a rock with the following inscription on the side facing south, "Died 1860 XIX." On the side facing north strange symbols were carved, interpreted at the time as having been written by Indians and leading to speculation that the rock was the gravestone of some chief. The mortality schedule of the 1860 census shows only two deaths in Clatsop County, one, S.J. Epley, a six-year old girl, and J.D. Shepherd, a 45-year old lumberman from New Jersey. Census records list a number of nineteen-year old males and females; further research may reveal the person for whom this stone was made.

Another marker was found in 1905 by P. A. Stokes and George W. Sanborn who were on their way to lunch walking over the new Duane Street improvements. They discovered a large flat rock with the name "Elliott" carved upon it. The stone was believed to be a monument marking the burial spot of some person and the plans were to turn it over to the Pioneer and Historical Society before it disappeared. It may be at the Oregon Historical Society in Portland.

Some startled boys discovered a cache of skulls at 11th and Harrison in

1902. A.B. Dalgity explained that he had tossed them there after having spent some time examining them while he was studying medicine. The skulls were those of Indians and were originally found on Clatsop Plains by T.S. Trullinger. The editor of the newspaper,

with an odd sense of humor, added that,

*There was nothing about the skulls to indicate that they were those of two innocent Indians slain 73 years ago [1829] by Old Chief Coboway for attempted abduction of two young princesses of the house of the Clatsop Chief, nor that the alleged victims of Coboway's wrath "were cursed and buried on Clatsop Plains to be resurrected only by the evil spirit in the shape of a horse with eyes of fire." Examination of the skulls failed to disclose evidence of*

*any such soul stirring tale which is believed to have originated in a pipe dream.*

### East Astoria gravesites

At least three gravesites have been found in East Astoria dating to the 1850's. The persons buried in all three appear to have been identified. In March, 1884, in an area near what is now 37th Street, on the south side of the roadway where excavations were being made to repair the road, the feet of a human skeleton were found extending out from the bank of earth.

According to the report of the incident,

*While the bones were being carefully picked up and collected, it was learned by an Astorian reporter that they were the only remains of an Italian sailor who came here in an American bark commanded by Captain Mitchell in 1853. The vessel anchored opposite Warner's mill which was then standing on the present site of the Pt. Adams Packing Co.'s premises [37th Street]. He was a Mason and was*

*given a decent sepulture [sic] by the then residents of the city as possible at the time to give. By a curious coincidence, Mr. Thomas Goodwin of Clatsop [Plains] happened along just as the bones were being exhumed. He was one of the party who buried the sailor 31 years ago and remembered the circumstances very well. There were with him, Capt. Alfred Crosby, Capt. Geo. Staples, William Spratt, William Harrington and others. Dr. Tuttle took charge of the bones.*

Cedar Street in Alderbrook was the site of another discovery in July, 1903. Bertha Anderson, Mrs. H. H. Anderson mentioned in the article below, lived on Cedar near 47th, probably close to the present house at 4697 Cedar, according to the 1900 federal census and the modern city directory.

*An interesting discovery was made this morning in Uppertown by the workmen who are filling in the alleyway west of Cedar Street. Contractor Goodin has a force of men removing the dirt from a lot adjoining that of Mrs. H. H. Anderson's and it was there that what appears to be an Indian grave was uncovered. An Indian skull was found together with nearly all the bones of a human skeleton. The workmen also found two gun barrels badly rusted, a sack containing a dozen Mexican dollars, strings of beads, knives, spoons, and a very handsome pipe containing the engraved bust of Benjamin Franklin, the head of the figure acting as a cover for the pipe. Contractor Goodin was so impressed with the pipe that he secured it by the payment of \$3 and he intends to keep it as a relic. Much interest has been taken by the men as to the facts in the case and it is likely that some day more will be known of the mystery that surrounds the discovery.*

Two days later, the mystery

appeared to have been solved,  
*It is thought that the grave which was uncovered by graders in Alderbrook on Saturday was that of Mrs. Robert Shortess. She was an Indian woman who . . . was buried on her husband's donation land claim in that locality about 50 years ago [1850's]. While several of the coins found in the grave were of older dates, one of them was coined in 1850 indicating that the body must have been buried about that time.*

Robert Shortess was one of our county's earliest white residents, having come to Oregon in 1839 and was living in Clatsop County by 1845, a rancher with twenty-two cattle. Ann Shortess died May 6, 1853. Some descendants of this couple still live in Astoria.

In June, 1883, probably in this same area, workmen cutting Cedar Street westward found a pile of human bones about a foot below the surface. The skeletons of five or six bodies were exhumed. The skulls were not flattened, indicating that they were possibly white people. A copper thimble was found near the remains.

The east side of Tongue Point, where the peninsula begins to leave the mainland, was the site of a sawmill in the 1850's, owned by Henry Marlin. His father died about 1855 and was buried near the mill. A newspaper from September, 1880 noted that his remains were being exhumed and sent to San Francisco for reinterment.

### Common burial grounds

The city fathers in the 1860's understood the need for a community cemetery and spent the next several decades trying to find a satisfactory location. Three public cemeteries were to be used in Astoria until a law was passed in 1897 prohibiting further burials within the city limits.

One of these burial grounds was used in the early 1850's and perhaps

before. This was on Block 55 (now Block 255), Shively's Astoria, between Irving and Jerome streets and 14th and 15th streets. It is described as being at the corner of 14th and Irving, "behind" the Catholic Church. Headstones that date to the 1850's, presently found at Hillside Cemetery, probably were earlier located at this cemetery. The name, Catholic Cemetery, commonly used, is a misnomer because the land had belonged to J.M. Shively and his wife, Susan Shively, who about March 1865 donated this block by deed to the Town of Astoria, according to a letter by O.K. Atwood, City Auditor-Treasurer in 1958. (The Catholic Church was built in 1873 to 1874 and was located west of the present church.)

Ferdinand Ferrell, City Sexton, placed the following notice in the *Weekly Astorian* in April 1878:

*Notice of the  
Removal of the Dead.  
The Common Council of the city of  
Astoria having instructed me to  
remove all bodies from the old  
cemetery near the Catholic  
Church, this is to notify all persons  
who have friends buried in said  
cemetery and who wish to attend  
their removal may do so before the  
first day of May next, at which time  
I shall proceed to remove all bodies  
then remaining in said cemetery.*

One of the bodies that he probably removed, in December, 1877, was that of J. McConnell who was buried by the Masons in 1855. When they exhumed the body, they found that the bones were decayed and the coffin rotten. The evergreens that the Masons had deposited in the grave were in perfect condition except for a change in color.

### Hillside Cemetery

These bodies were to be moved into a new cemetery that was the Hillside Cemetery located on Block 93, at 15th and Niagara. This cemetery still survives today despite an attempt by the

city fathers to vacate it and turn the land over to other uses. The book, *Hillside Cemetery And Other Astoria Burial Sites*, by Joyce Morrell, and published by the Clatsop County Genealogy Society in 1988, gives a history of this cemetery along with a reading of the surviving stones and a survey of the city sexton's records.

The minutes of the Board of Trustees of the Town of Astoria from 1856 to 1871 details the negotiations for a community cemetery. In May, 1862 a special committee was appointed to obtain a suitable location. A public hearing was to be held on July 7, 1862 to deliberate on this subject. In 1864, the Cemetery Committee recommended accepting the offer of J.M. Shively to give the town two acres of his land on the west line of his donation land claim adjacent to the land claim of John McClure. Shively's plan of the town of Astoria made about 1850 shows this to be the present Block 92 between 13th and 14th Streets and Madison and Niagara. This is the block now bisected by Miller Lane. It is unknown if any burials were made in this block. At this early date, this was heavily wooded, rugged terrain. In February of 1865, this area and Block 93 were surveyed. In April of 1865, James Welch deeded the adjacent Block 93 to the Town of Astoria for \$500 and in May, 1865

sealed proposals for clearing off the ground for a cemetery were opened. In the next thirty years over 700 burials were made in Hillside Cemetery, the most recent occurring about 1903 (in spite of the law).

Another cemetery that no longer exists, except in the memory of a number of residents, was located on the south side of Grand Avenue just west of what is now the Lutheran Church on 33rd and Grand. The graveyard originally adjoined the Episcopalian Holy Innocent's Chapel which was built in 1874, the date when the first burials were probably made. About the time the property changed hands, it was decided to vacate the cemetery. Several Uppertown residents remember vividly the exhumations. The bodies of John Adair Sr. and his wife, who originally owned the donation land claim this part of Uppertown is on, were removed to Oceanview on August 18, 1924. Some bodies are believed to be buried here still. ♦

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Cemeteries and gravesites are fragile places deserving of our respect and care. The above sites are probably only a small sample of what still awaits the accidental turn of a shovel.

## Indian Grave at Seaside

Indian burial sites have been found in many areas of the county. One large cemetery was in the Indian Village area in the north part of Seaside. Another burial was excavated by workers digging a basement on property owned by J.L. Gurwell on West 12th Avenue, according to the *Astoria Budget* of April 25, 1933. A skull with a sloping forehead was found that appeared to have been smashed in on one side. Grave goods included an ancient sabre, a drawing knife on which the handles had rotted away, remnants of a leather bag, a blue and white China plate marked, "Copeland," and a China platter to match, a brown glazed pitcher which was broken into fragments in the process of digging it out, a small brass telescope green with age, and a handful of blue glass beads. ♦

# Graves on Tillamook Head

## The Lupatia Wreck

**T**he sign reads "AT THIS SPOT ARE BURIED 12 MEN FROM THE CREW OF THE BRITISH BARK 'LUPATIA' WRECKED EAST OF THE TILLAMOOK LIGHTHOUSE JANUARY 3, 1881." The sign was located one half mile south of the deathtrap off Tillamook Head. On the left is Harry Wheatley, owner of Selnes and Wheatley's Merchantile store and sponsor and worker on Seaside's Annual Trail Day in May over Tillamook Head to Bald Mountain, Indian Beach and Cannon Beach. On the right is Bill Laughton, famous for his hiking skills, who also guided many groups on the trails of Clatsop County.

Lewis and Dryden's Maritime

*History of the Pacific Northwest* tells the story of the wreck:

The British bark Lupatia bound for the Columbia was beating up the coast on the night of January 3rd in a dense fog. The lighthouse on Tillamook Rock was in course of construction and about 8:00 p.m. Captain Wheeler, who was in charge of the work, was startled by the sound of voices outside. The weather was thick, with a strong southwest gale, but they at once sighted the red light of a ship inshore, and heard a terror-stricken voice give the order, "Hard aport." Captain Wheeler immediately ordered lanterns placed in the uncompleted tower, and as quickly as possible, a large bonfire was lighted. The glare lit up the scene so that Wheeler and his men could plainly see the vessel struggling to escape, less than six hundred feet away. Her yards were aback, and she seemed to be working out of the dangerous place, but soon afterward the red light disappeared and no further cries were heard from those on board. The watchers were hopeful that she had succeeded in working out of her perilous position but when morning dawned, a shattered topmast and other portions of the rigging were discovered above the surface of the water near the rocks along-shore. Not a soul was left to tell the tale, but the next day the bodies of twelve men were washed up on the beach. Whining about them was a half grown shepherd dog, which had been more fortunate than his human companions.

Inez Stafford Hanson adds in her book, *Life on Clatsop*, that S. K. Stanley, Bill Eberman, Monroe Grimes, Jim Austin and Jake Brallier went out to bury the bodies, but they could not bring them back to the cove which was the usual burial ground for drowning victims. They wrapped the bodies in the ship's sail and buried them in the rocks as far out of reach of the waves as possible and erected a marker over the spot. The marker shown in the photograph was a replacement for the original one. Rock slides later hid the exact location. ♦



Photo and information courtesy of Vern Raw

# Clatsop's Past

## VOLUNTEER YOUR WRITING SKILLS

Share your special knowledge of Clatsop County's past or that of your relatives and friends. Write down, or record on tape, your recollections. Then send them to *Cumtux* Editor, Clatsop County Historical Society, 1618 Exchange, Astoria, Oregon 97103. Have you researched the history of your house? Do you collect old photographs or postcards, business tokens, letters, bottles, etc. that relate to Clatsop County's history? Share them with others through the pages of *Cumtux*.

## WRITER, TEACHER AND BUSINESSWOMAN

Denise M. Alborn, for several years a volunteer in the archives and member of the staff at CCHS and also a teacher of local history at Clatsop Community College, is the author of "Crimping and Shanghaiing on the Columbia River" in the Fall 1992 issue of the *Oregon Historical Quarterly*. Denise, who received a B.A. in history from the University of Oregon in 1984 and an M.A. in history from Fordham University in 1987, has written two articles for *Cumtux*: "Shanghai Days in Astoria," in the Winter, 1988 issue and "The Hindus of Uppertown," in the Winter, 1989 issue. She is also proprietor of the Hide & Silk Company, selling clothing accessories to boutiques across the country.

## SWIM PHOTO IDENTIFICATION

We are grateful to Annabell A. Miller of Astoria who, with the help of

her friends, was able to identify most of those young women who were on the back cover of our Spring 1993 issue.

They were:

Front row, left to right:

1. Unknown, 2. Beverly Langhart, 3. Helen Wahl, 4. Kathryn Kukura, 5. Borghild Selbeck, 6. Grace Grams, 7. Edith Hiatt, 8. Frances Kussman.

Back row, left to right:

1. Ingeborg Grotting, 2. Unknown, 3. Esther Smedegaard, 4. Luella Nyman, 5. Miss La Barre, 6. Dorothy Gustafson, 7. Jane Reith, 8. Francis Moore?, 9. Louise Dahl.

## A FAMILY OF HISTORIANS

Cynthia J. Marconeri wrote "Chinese-Americans in Astoria, Oregon, 1880-1930" for a graduate class in History. She is the daughter of Jean Anderson, well-known CCHS worker and volunteer coordinator, who guided a team of people in refurbishing the Flavel House a few years ago.

## UPPER ASTORIA PHOTO DATE

The centerfold photograph in this issue can be no older than 1876 when the Uppertown schoolhouse was built on the corner of 36th and Duane, as it is in the photo; it cannot be younger than 1888 when the Benjamin Young house was built, as it does not appear in the photo. Can anyone provide a closer date?



Photo courtesy of the Compleat Photographer #131

## A Giant Crab Cocktail

*A crowd lines up on the Owen Feed Dock for a crab cocktail served from a large "glass" at a Regatta in the 'forties.*

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**Clatsop County Historical Society**  
1618 Exchange St., Astoria, OR 97103

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